

7 July 2026

Mr Llyr Gruffydd MS
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Resilience and Sustainability
5th Floor, Tŷ Hywel
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1SN

By email: Correspondence.Llyr.Gruffydd@gov.wales

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

Wales' Deposit Return Scheme and Local Shops

I am writing to congratulate you on your appointment as Cabinet Secretary for Rural Resilience and Sustainability and to set out ACS' (Association of Convenience Stores) commitment to working constructively with you and your officials on the development and delivery of the Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) in Wales by October 2027. ACS represents over 50,000 convenience retailers across the UK, including more than 3,000 stores operating in Wales, of which over 88% are independent businesses. I have included a short briefing of ACS' 2026 Welsh Local Shop Report, which provides an overview of the convenience sector. We will be launching the report on 14 July in the Senedd and would welcome you to join us in celebrating the contribution of retailers in Wales. You will also be able to pick up a copy of the report on the day. Full details of the launch have been sent to officials in your department.

Local shops play a vital role in Welsh communities, particularly in rural and underserved areas and will be critical to the successful operation of a DRS. For the scheme to succeed, it must be designed and implemented in a way that is practical, proportionate and compatible with existing retail operations. In the convenience sector, space constraints are one of the biggest challenges meaning the inclusion of glass in DRS in Wales will be especially problematic. We believe that a consistent UK-wide approach that excludes glass as an in-scope material from day one is essential to minimise additional cost on local shops and consumer confusion.

With just 15 months until the proposed go-live date, there is currently no agreed plan to move forward at the pace required. Local shops urgently need certainty to make investment decisions, adapt store operations and train colleagues. We urge you to formally appoint a Deposit Management Organisation (DMO) in Wales. The DMO will play a central role in delivering infrastructure, managing logistics and its delayed appointment is already impacting the ability of businesses to prepare for October 2027. Without immediate action to address these issues, it is highly unlikely that the scheme would be able to be rolled out successfully in October 2027.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss these challenges and to work collaboratively on ensuring that the DRS is deliverable for convenience stores and is effective in achieving its objectives. We will make contact with your Ministerial office to see if you have any time for a meeting, for further information on our position please contact: Aishwari.Mahavir@acs.org.uk.

Yours sincerely,

Ed Woodall
Chief Executive

